

Traditional Registration System Frequently Asked Questions "FAQ's"

1. What is CETR?

CETR stands for Combined Electronic Taxpayer Registration System. The intent is to provide both streamlined sales tax registration and traditional sales and use tax registration through one common interface. The system will allow for both new registrations as well as updated to registration data. The long term goal is to extend the TRS to include other business tax types such as withholding etc.

2. What does TRS stand for?

TRS stands for Traditional Registration System.

3. What is TRS?

TRS is a web based application that serves as a pass-through application that allows the taxpayers to send registration data to the states online.

4. Is TRS a web-based application?

Yes, TRS is a web based application and can be accessed by most recent versions of Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape's Communicator and other Internet browsers.

5. What is the operating environment of TRS?

TRS application resides on Microsoft Windows 2003 Server Platform and is designed using Microsoft .NET programming framework. The application is built in ASP.NET, C#, XML and uses SQL server as its relational database management system.

6. Who will host the TRS?

Multistate Tax Commission (MTC) will host the TRS system at their DC headquarters office.

7. IS TRS Secured?

TRS is hosted at the MTC DC in a secured environment behind a Nokia – Checkpoint firewall in segmented environment. MTC has created a physically separate network (different from MTC network) to host TRS. TRS web application runs on secure protocols (HTTPS) allow secure session between states (clients) and the server.

8. Who are the primary users of TRS?

Primary users of TRS application are taxpayers who need to register or make changes to sales and use tax registration data.

9. How will taxpayer use the TRS?

URL for TRS is <https://www.statetaxregistration.org>. Taxpayers will be provided with this URL from various states and other organization websites to access the TRS.

10. How will states use TRS?

States use TRS to receive taxpayer's registration information and acknowledge the receipt of the transmission and the documents periodically. States have two

methods to choose from in order to receive taxpayer's data in XML format and acknowledge transmissions (based on the XML schema designed by TIGERS). These methods are:

- **Pull**
Pull methods includes the use of *web services* and *https*
- **Push**
Push methods include the use of *ftp*

11.What is PULL method?

Pull method is where the TRS system prepares the taxpayers registration system information in a well-formed and a valid XML format to be stored in TRS web servers to be picked up states at a later time using the web services or https protocol.

PULL (*Client pulls state specific data from the CETR web server*)

a. Web services

Web services are loosely coupled contracted components that communicate via XML-based interfaces. They are self contained applications that can be described, published, located, and invoked over the Internet. *The protocols used to access web services will be https and SOAP.*

For further information go to, <http://www.w3c.org/2002/ws/> or <http://www.webservices.org>.

b. Web Site download

MTC will host a website and provide user-id and password to clients to access the website. Once the client is authenticated they will be allowed to download the state specific XML files form the web site. After they download the file clients will acknowledge the receipt of the file. *The protocols used to allow download from a web site are https.*

12.What is PUSH method?

Push method is where a state provides a location and the necessary credentials to allow TRS system to upload XML files.

PUSH (*MTC will push data to the client using ftp*)

- a. ftp (File Transfer Protocol) - A way of transferring files over the Internet from one computer to another. *The protocols used to upload a file to states site is https and ftp.*

Data transmissions that are *pushed* from MTC to a client will occur by MTC initiating a file sent by means of FTP to the client. In order to secure the data transmission, the FTP session must be conducted over a secure network connection from MTC to the client. The FTP protocol does not inherently secure client credentials (username and password) when they are transmitted over a non-secure network connection (i.e. the Internet). For these reasons, network administration to provide for a secure channel of communication to conduct the FTP session is needed. The network protocols that allow for this

type of communication are IPSec and/or Secure VPN network connections as previously mentioned in the document.

13.What do you mean by Acknowledgement by States?

States acknowledge the acceptance or rejection of the registration document by sending a well formed, valid *Acknowledgment XML document* (a XML document based on TIGERS TRS Acknowledgement Schema Version 1) using web services or https within three business working days (preferably daily) using the transmission methods they have chosen. These acknowledgements will:

- a. confirm the receipt of the XML transmission with/without error
- b. confirm the receipt of taxpayer document with/without errors

14. How will states acknowledge?

States will acknowledge the registration data using the CETR web site or using a web service.

15.What if States finds transmission and the document were good?

State will still send the acknowledgment to the TRS system and the transaction will be closed.

16.What if States finds transmission good and errors in the document (such as invalid content per schema or application business rules?

State will send the acknowledgment to the TRS system with details of errors as listed in the Acknowledgment schema. After TRS receives the Acknowledgement files, a TRS administrator will contact the state representative. Upon resolving the issues, the transaction will be closed.

17.What if States are not ready to receive XML files?

States will have to be ready to receive and acknowledge XML files before they join TRS.

18.If there are no registrations entered for a state on a specific day, will there be a file created for that state to pick up for that day?

No there will not be any files generated on that day for that state.

19.Although we are starting as a pull/web site download state, we may wish to change at a later date, especially if we will need to accommodate streamlined transaction pushes from CSP's. Do you have any issues with changing down the road?

No, but you will have to contact MTC to change your method of receiving files so that we can make the appropriate changes in state configuration files in the TRS system.

20.Is there an expectation that, in production, we pull daily? Or will our file merely accumulate until we do a pull?

State should pull every working day. Older files are purged once a successful acknowledgement is received from a previous pull.

21.We think we will be dealing with site to site VPN's (firewall to firewall). Can you confirm?

We allow access to port 80 and port 443. Consult your technical support for any changes at your end.

22.Does the MTC website provide unattended (batch) mode or does it rely on a manual authentication/download process? If an unattended mode is available, where do we find the specification for how the interface works?

Yes, for web services. For https: a manual pull is required after you are successfully authenticated to the CETR system. We will provide the URL and user name password to include in your SOAP client.

23.How will userid/passwords be managed by MTC, specifically as it relates to number of client accounts (1/state is implied)?

MTC will distribute the user_id password through phone or via email.

24.What is the password expiration period?

No password expiration date is part of version 1.

25.What is the format of userid/password?

Clear text alphanumeric strings of length 6 or more

26.What is the frequency of posting the registration data to the MTC website?

Registration data will be posted once a day (Midnight EST) if a taxpayer registers with the TRS system. If there is no taxpayer registering with TRS system on that day no data will be posted.

27. What is the retention period for data on the website?

As soon as the registration data is successfully acknowledged without any errors (and if with errors, the problem is resolved) the registration file will be removed from the website or will not be available through web services. CETR system retains data for a period of ninety days after which the data is purged. MTC will not have any access to any data after ninety days period.

28. What is the CETR policy regarding re-posting data outside of the default retention window?

CETR has no access to data after the ninety day retention period. If reposting of registration data has to be done within the ninety day retention period, it will be dealt on case by case basis. MTC will not have any access to any data after ninety days period.

29.Considering the possibility that a transmission can contain multiple unique registration transactions, what is the process to deal with rejected transactions?

MTC will only deal with rejected transaction due to any errors caused by invalid content per schema or application business rules.

30.Do we need to post the rejected transactions to the CETR website? If so, how?

A state acknowledges the registration data with or without any errors using the CETR website.

31.Is there a manual process to deal with failed transactions? If so, is any notification to the originator of the transaction necessary?

Yes, there is a Manual process to deal with rejected registration data due to CETR system errors. You need to call the CETR support

(TRSupport@statetaxregistration.orh) to resolve the problem. It's up to the state to notify the originator.

32.How do States join TRS?

Contact Sheldon Laskin at slaskin@mtc.gov

33.What state can join?

All states may join.

TESTING OF TRS APPLICATION

34.Will the testing for both Streamlined and Traditional Registration system?

No, at this point of time testing will be only for Traditional Registration system.

35.How will the TRS application tested?

The TRS application will be tested for two purposes; a) Application testing and b) transmission testing

36.What is Application Testing?

Application testing involves the use of web-based application interfaces and filling required forms to look for errors.

37.Who will do the application testing?

A test team has been formed, made up of state representatives (TN, SD, TX & MN) and a small number of private sector participants.

38.Will the states test the application in-house or is travel is needed?

No travel is required. An URL will be provided to test the application.

39.How much time is required to do the transmission testing?

Estimated to be between 5 to 10 hours.

40.Why does the WSDL not describe the data that will be returned within the array of strings (string[]) it sends as a return value?

The WSDL only describes the return value as an array of strings because it intentionally has no other knowledge of the contents of the array being returned to the user from the web service call. All the web service knows is that it has an array of items and the data type of those items is the "string" data type. In reality, each "string" is a TIGERS XML document that adheres to the TIGERS XML schema. When the caller of the web service selects a particular item (string) in the array, the caller of the web service can use the string to create a single XML document. So, the array (or collection) of strings returned by the web service will have 'X' number strings for 'X' number of transmissions.

41. On the "GetTransmission" web service call, what does the "boolRetrieveAllAvailable" parameter mean?

The "boolRetrieveAllAvailable" parameter is a 'true/false' value that indicates whether the service should return all TIGERS XML Transmission documents (if TRUE) since the last retrieval of documents, or only the most recent Transmission document (if FALSE).

For example, if MTC sends Transmissions once per day, and a caller uses the web service once per week, there are up to 5 Transmissions waiting for the caller every week. When the caller uses the web service and sets the "boolRetrieveAllAvailable" parameter to TRUE, all 5 Transmission documents are returned. But if the caller sets the "boolRetrieveAllAvailable" parameter to FALSE, then only 1 Transmission is returned (the last one).